

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

On the Shores of Perga: A Theological Analysis of John Mark's Departure from the First Pauline
Missionary Journey and its Implications for the Gentile Mission

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I. Introduction

In approximately AD 48, the Apostle Paul, his coworker Barnabas, and Barnabas' cousin, John Mark, boarded a ship at Seleucia and headed for Cyprus to initiate their first missionary journey (Acts 13:4).¹ Set apart by the Holy Spirit and commissioned by the church at Antioch, these three men began a mission which, in retrospect, can be counted amongst the most prolific events in world history. It is difficult to imagine that these men were fully aware of the impact their work would soon have upon the early Christian church, and especially in regards to the Gentile mission. It was during this mission that an unexpected setback occurred—John Mark departed from the mission shortly after their arrival at Perga in Pamphylia. Although Luke offers no direct reason for Mark's departure, the events that soon unfold point to an unprecedented movement that occurs within the Gentile mission. This study will examine the viability of the idea that John Mark's departure was potentially motivated by theological differences with Paul that the Gospel message could be offered to the Gentiles without the traditional requirements of Jewish proselytization. Additionally, this analysis addresses a possible theological rift which may have occurred between Mark and Paul, which happened somewhere between their departure from Paphos and their arrival at Perga in Pamphylia, where Paul may have shared his missionary objective to John Mark and Barnabas to evangelize to the Gentiles without the requirement of the adoption of the Mosaic laws in order to be saved. This question on the requirements for Gentile membership in the church and qualifications for Jewish-Gentile table fellowship would later become the central focus of the Jerusalem Council, and Luke may have intended for Mark's departure from the first missionary journey to serve as the distinct event that initiated the Gentile question in the early church. **Thus, John Mark's departure from the first Pauline missionary**

¹ Unless otherwise noted, Scripture taken from English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

journey may have been theologically motivated, based on his theological view that the Gentiles could not live sanctified lives apart from the adoption of the Mosaic Law.

Conceptually, this paper will focus on the possibility of John Mark's departure as motivated by his theological differences with Paul on the issues of Gentile salvation in relation to the Mosaic Law, its implications, and effects on the Gentile ministry. The question will be posed, "What motivated John Mark to abandon the first missionary journey and what implications did this event have on the early church?" Further, an argument will be made that the best explanation is found in John Mark's disagreement with Paul's theology on the basis for the salvation of the Gentiles in relation to the Mosaic Law, and that this event both explains why John Mark returned to Jerusalem (and not Antioch) and why the Jerusalem council was convened immediately upon Paul and Barnabas' return. Indeed, the language of Acts 15 addresses the debate that arose in the early church and the 'burden' of the law that a certain sect of Pharisees attempted to place on Gentiles, insisting that they be circumcised and commanding them to keep the law of Moses in order to be sanctified and accepted into the fellowship of the Christian church. As such, this event would spark controversy in the early church which was eventually resolved at the Jerusalem Council. Despite its apparent resolution, the effects of this event would be felt for several years, dividing both Barnabas and Mark from Paul's continued missionary work. There is no indication that Paul and Barnabas ever worked together again, while John Mark would be divided from Paul for several years until they eventually reconciled. Through this lens, it would thus appear that Luke did not intend for John Mark's departure to serve as a parenthetical note to his account, but rather as a springboard to one of the greatest theological challenges facing the early church in the evangelization of the Gentiles. It may well be that Luke intended to use John Mark's departure as the catalytic event that incited the Gentile controversy. The Jerusalem

Council's decision to accept the Gentiles without requirements of the Mosaic Law may have also served as the basis for John Mark's decision to return with Paul and Barnabas on the second journey, and eventually as the basis for John Mark's reconciliation with Paul (Col. 4:10-11; 2 Tim. 4:11). If the aforementioned thesis is valid, then it is perhaps best to begin by examining the events surrounding John Mark's departure, and to this we now turn.

II. John Mark Departs: An Analysis of Acts 13:13

Several years after Paul and Barnabas began their work at the church in Antioch, the Holy Spirit commissioned them to embark upon their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). Luke describes how they took along John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), whom they had brought back with them to Antioch after their visit to Jerusalem. After a brief work on Cyprus, the men continued on into the Asian mainland where, from Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark suddenly left them and returned to Jerusalem (13:13). Although Luke offers no direct explanation for the reasoning behind John Mark's departure, this should not imply that Luke left no textual clues, nor should it imply that his departure was insignificant to the narrative. Assuming the former can lead one to overlook the textual data, while assuming the latter can lead to the assumption that Mark's return "was not disastrous."² Even a brief examination will reveal that Luke indeed left much for the reader to witness in the negative impact this event had upon both the Gentile mission and the personal relationships of those involved. If Luke's narrative aims, as one scholar notes, to display "the triumph of Christianity in a hostile world,"³

² Homer A. Kent, *Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in Acts*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1972), 110.

³ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 353.

then one can only wonder if Luke intended for that hostility to include the Jewish Christians who opposed the new Gentile mission initiated by Paul and the Antioch church.

Throughout the history of the church, a variety of theories have been offered to explain Mark's sudden departure. Interestingly, the most common approach taken by scholars on this event is agnostic. A general silence and passive dismissal is often found in this regard. Of the theories that are expounded, many are offered with little to no evidence to support them. For example, although Paul later described the dangers he faced while on his missionary journeys (2 Cor. 11:23-28), it is a stretch to assume that Mark's departure was due to his unwillingness to be exposed to such perils.⁴ Some scholars have noted Luke's shift in name order in Acts 13:13, with Paul now listed before Barnabas, and suggest that Mark did not approve of Paul's assumed leadership.⁵ This theory carries some textual weight, but the fact that Barnabas was apparently willing to accept this change in roles leaves the argument wanting. Others suggest that Mark grew homesick and desired to return home to see his mother, but again this theory is based on mere conjecture, and it is equally possible that Mark was motivated to return to Jerusalem in order to report on Paul's new agenda to the Gentiles. Still others note that Mark was likely of a wealthy household, since his mother's home was large enough to serve as a center for Christian worship, and suggest that perhaps he was not ready for the arduous travel and difficulties experienced in the journey.⁶ However, when one examines Mark's complete life and ministry, including his second mission with Barnabas and later work with both Peter and Paul, Mark

⁴ Although A. T. Robertson suggests that John Mark may not have agreed with the change in plans after Paul's assumed leadership and perhaps did not approve of Paul's "aggressive attitude towards the heathen," he concludes Mark's unwillingness to be exposed to perils as his main motivation for departure, based on 2 Cor. 11:26. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. III (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1930), 185.

⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. Gordon D. Fee, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 251.

⁶ Louis Barbieri, *Mark*, Moody Gospel Commentary, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 15.

consistently appears willing to work for long periods away from Jerusalem, leaving little to support this theory. Others have suggested that the source of the departure was because “Mark had not yet escaped from Peter’s influence,”⁷ yet failing to specify exactly what that influence entails.

William Ramsay suggested that Paul contracted malaria when they arrived at Pamphylia, forcing him to alter his plans and head for higher ground to Antioch, and it was this change of plans that caused Mark to abandon the journey since “the new proposal was a departure from the scheme with which they had been charged.”⁸ Although Ramsay ascribed Paul’s contraction of malaria as his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7-9), there is no textual evidence to support this theory or the idea that this motivated the group to proceed to Pisidian Antioch after their arrival at Pamphylia. Indeed, it would seem unlikely that Luke would leave out such an important detail, especially if it provided a justification for Mark’s departure. Additionally, despite the unsettled claim on the source of Paul’s persistent ailment, evidence for a type of eye disease seems most convincing (Acts 9:18; Gal. 4:15; 6:11). Although Ramsay was referring to a departure from the travel agenda, his theory may have been closer than expected concerning Paul’s evangelical agenda. John McRay has noted that Mark’s theology was perhaps closer to Peter than Paul’s Gentile agenda, and that while Barnabas was in charge of the mission to Cyprus, which was more Jewish-oriented, “Mark may have become dissatisfied when Paul took the lead *and projected a dangerous and unplanned extension of their mission among the Gentiles of southern Galatia.*”⁹ This view seems to point in the right direction but still lacks precision. Amongst the

⁷ G. Campbell Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1924), 323.

⁸ William M. Ramsay, *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen*, Mark Wilson, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 85-86.

⁹ Emphasis added. John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 119.

gems of prevailing theories, one less common yet more radiant appears, “Paul’s preaching to the Gentiles may have been too liberal for him.”¹⁰ It is this theory to which we now turn.

Because of Mark’s relationship with Barnabas, and the initial site of their journey was in Cyprus, Barnabas’ home island, it seems most reasonable that Mark’s motivation to join the men was based more on his relationship with Barnabas than Paul’s. Mark and Barnabas were cousins (Col. 4:10), and this relationship seemed to flow deeper than the events surrounding this journey, for when Mark later intended to make a second journey, “Barnabas was prepared to make allowances for him,”¹¹ while Paul was not. Mark may also have had different expectations of the missionary journey than what eventually unfolded, for Barnabas was a Levite (Acts 4:36) and both he and Mark were deeply influenced by Peter, even to the point of prioritizing their Jewish culture over the Gentile agenda at times (Gal. 2:13). Thus, when Mark’s Jewish background and training at the hands of the Jerusalem apostles is brought into consideration, his theology seems at odds with what apparently became Paul’s new agenda after their arrival at Pamphylia, and this appears to offer a broader explanation for the events that would unfold. McRay suggests that “perhaps in theology Mark was closer to Peter and his mission to the Jews (Gal. 2:7) than he was to Paul’s Gentile agenda.”¹² As such, Paul’s new mission to the Gentiles may have proved too radical for John Mark, a man who, up to that point, was primarily connected to Peter and largely influenced by the theology of the church in Jerusalem. Longenecker suggests that the conversion of Sergius Paulus at Cyprus may have initiated the discussion of a direct approach to the

¹⁰ R. J. Knowling, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Expositor’s Greek Testament, vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), 289.

¹¹ I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 5, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-
Varsity Press, 1980), 236.

¹² McRay, 119.

Gentiles, and that “John Mark’s departure was because he disagreed with Paul [and] it was his return to . . . Jerusalem that may originally have stirred the “Judaizers” in the church to action.”¹³

It is worthy of note that John Mark is not heard from again until a decade later, when Paul references Mark as reconciled to his ministry (Col. 4:10; Phlm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11),¹⁴ a clear indication of the consequences of his decision to abandon the first mission. Some have challenged the idea that Mark departed the mission based on his disagreement with Paul’s new mission to the Gentiles, noting that it “does not square with the undisputed fact that his Gospel was written primarily for Romans.”¹⁵ However, this view erroneously assumes no transformative work of the Spirit throughout Mark’s life. The activities surrounding his departure in Acts 13:13 are at the onset of his ministry, while the writing of his Gospel occurred after years of influence and exposure to the new theology surrounding Jewish-Gentile table fellowship. Indeed, it would appear even more surprising to witness the absence of the μετάνοια within the life of the δούλος through the work and exposure of the kerygma.

Immediately following Mark’s departure, Paul and Barnabas intentionally shift their focus towards the Gentiles when the Jews reject the Gospel (Acts 13:44-48). This textual clue seems to connect Mark’s departure with the new missionary agenda that immediately unfolded at Pisidian Antioch, giving the impression that the events surrounding the former were directly motivated by the latter. Nor is it a coincidence that Mark returned to Jerusalem, and not Antioch, the site of their original departure. Perhaps Luke intended to suggest that a personal agenda on Mark’s behalf was unfolding, and this plan involved his intention to report to the Jerusalem

¹³ Richard N. Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 9, Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 421.

¹⁴ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, D. A. Carson, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 5.

¹⁵ John Pollock, *The Apostle: A Life of Paul*, (Colorado Springs, CO: ChariotVictor Publishing, 1985), 75.

Church on Paul's activities, thus inciting a debate that later unfolded at Antioch. On this possibility, John Stott poses a similarly striking question, "Did [Mark], as a loyal member of Jerusalem's conservative Jewish church, disagree with Paul's bold policy of Gentile evangelism? Was it even he who, on his return to Jerusalem, provoked the Judaizers into opposing Paul?"¹⁶

II.A. A Word Study on Ἀποχωρέω

In Acts 13:13, Luke states that Mark "left them" (ἀποχωρέω) and returned to Jerusalem, but what exactly did he imply by this action? While the general translation of the aorist verb ἀποχωρέω is "left" (ESV, NASB, NIV), the synchronic definition is more implicit, meaning to "depart" or "desert" (Sb. 7835, 14; 3 Macc. 2:33), or even an "intentional withdrawal" (Enoch 14:23; 2 Macc. 4:33).¹⁷ Of the only three NT uses of ἀποχωρέω, Luke uses the term twice (Lk. 9:39; Acts 13:13), while Matthew uses the term only once (Matt. 7:23). Aside from Luke's intended meaning in Acts, the other two references (Matt. 7:23; Lk. 9:39) carry a more emphatic meaning. For example, Matthew uses the term to describe Jesus' response to the false followers who will be revealed in the end times, where He declares, "Depart (ἀποχωρεῖτε) from me!" (7:23). Luke's other use of ἀποχωρέω, where a father, who begs Jesus to heal his son from demonic possession, describes the demonic spirit as unwilling to "depart from," or "leave," (ἀποχωρεῖ) the boy. In the LXX, the sole usage of the verbal form (ἀποχωροῦσιν) is found in

¹⁶ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*, The Bible Speaks Today, John R. W. Stott, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 221.

¹⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 125.

Jeremiah 26:5, where the Hebrew parallel (גִּדְּוּ) describes a people who had “turned back,” tended to “diverge,” were “disloyal,” and “withdrew” from the Lord.¹⁸

A diachronic analysis of ἀποχωρέω reveals that, aside from its meaning to “go away from” (Ar.Ach.456; Pl.R.394a), it can also specifically apply to the running away of slaves (PCair.Zen.15^v.41), and even the withdrawal or “dissent from opinions” (Gal.15.356, cf. Arr.Epict.4.1.53).¹⁹ Josephus uses ἀποχωρέω to one who would “leave” (Ant. 1.261), “retreat” (Ant. 15.149), “return” (Ant. 20.123), “depart” (Wars 1.24), and even to “desert” (Wars 6.229).²⁰ Philo’s single use of the term also fits into this syntactical form, meaning to “go away” or “leave” (Mos. 6.77). Finally, a key textual clue to help identify Luke’s intended meaning behind John Mark’s departure in Acts 13:13 is found in Acts 15:38, where Paul and Barnabas have a “sharp disagreement,” severe enough to cause Paul to consider Mark disqualified for a second journey. This would imply that, whatever intention Mark had for leaving them at Perga, Paul had not agreed with the decision. Luke here describes Paul’s interpretation of Mark’s actions, not as merely an act of “leaving” (ἀποχωρέω), but uses the participle form of the verb ἀφίστημι, meaning a deliberate “withdrawal” and even “desertion”.²¹ Syntactically, the contrastive conjunction δὲ also lends semantic force to the phrase, for it anticipates the connected phrase as contrasting, or oppositional, to the phrase that precedes it.²² As such, Luke appears to identify a

¹⁸ Hoogendyk, Isaiah, David DeSilva, Randall Tan, and Rick Brannan, ed. *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012).

¹⁹ Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 228.

²⁰ Flavius Josephus, *Josephus: The Complete Works*, trans. by William Whiston, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998).

²¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 157.

²² Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 671.

significant break in the flow of the narrative, in which John Mark's departure from Paul and Barnabas not only interrupted the flow of the mission but also seemed oppositional to its purpose.

Interestingly, Luke does not use the seemingly gentler verb, ἀποτάσσω, which describes a “man who makes formal parting from his folks,”²³ in his description of Mark’s departure in Acts 13:13. To have used ἀποτάσσω would have clarified that Mark’s departure did not hold any tensions, expressing a more “formal farewell.”²⁴ This term described Jesus’ gentler parting from the disciples before they went to Bethsaida (Mk 6:46). Nor was this term foreign to Luke, who used ἀποτάσσω to describe the man’s request to “bid farewell” to his household before following Jesus (Lk. 9:61), and again in Acts 18:18 to describe how Paul “took leave” (ESV, NASB), or “left” (NIV), the church at Corinth in an obviously positive manner. Why did Luke not use ἀποτάσσω if it more precisely defines a cordial parting of ways? Indeed, Luke’s choice to utilize ἀποχωρέω, instead, to describe Mark’s departure at Perga were intentional, for it appears to describe, not only Mark’s act of departure, but the *manner of his departure* as well. This idea is further reinforced when later, in Acts 15:38, Paul and Barnabas are separated by their sharp disagreement over whether or not to bring John Mark with them on their second journey. Here, Luke does not use the verb form of ἀποχωρέω to describe Paul’s view of John Mark’s act, but rather the aorist verb ἀποστάντα, describing a distinct withdrawal as in the “desertion of someone.”²⁵ Whether Luke intended to offer a textual clue to his meaning in Acts 13:13, or

²³ Kittel, G. and G. W. Bromiley, Eds., “ἀποτάσσω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 8, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 33.

²⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

perhaps Paul's perspective on Mark's actions at Perga, is not clear, but the effects of Mark's decision on Paul and Barnabas' joint ministry is undeniable. This is not the only textual clue apparent in the text, for it also appears that Luke utilized names as indicators of key events within his narrative.

II.B. Lukan Use of Names as Identifying Markers

Silence, in certain contexts, does not always imply that a historian has nothing to say. Indeed, Hengel notes that, where Luke is silent about something, “there are usually special reasons for it.”²⁶ Despite Luke's silence on the motivation behind John Mark's departure, several clues are seemingly in place within the narrative, including word structure, the use of names, name order, and the sequence of events surrounding John Mark's departure. It is worth noting that Luke varies the way in which he utilizes John Mark's name, differentiating his use of the Hebrew name “John” and the Greek name “Mark” throughout his narrative. When paralleled with the events surrounding Mark's departure from the mission in Acts 13:13, the pattern becomes even more striking. When Luke first introduces Mark, he is at his mother's house in Jerusalem, a likely home church, praying for the release of Peter with other Christians. Under Peter's guidance, Mark is thus introduced as a disciple studying under a man called primarily to the Jews (Gal. 2:7). Mark was also the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), who was a Levite and native of Cyprus. Here, most are quick to note that Luke refers to Mark by both names, John Mark, but it is oft-overlooked that the Hebrew name John (Ἰωάννης) is given priority, as “John, whose other name was Mark” (Acts 12:12). This again occurs in his second reference, when Peter and Barnabas return to Antioch from Jerusalem and take along with them “John, whose

²⁶ Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity*, John Bowden, trans. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 36.

other name was Mark” (12:25). In both of these references, Luke applies the participle form of ἐπικαλέω to identify John’s Gentile name Mark as merely “a surname.”²⁷ When the three of them depart on their first missionary journey, Luke refers to John Mark only by his Hebrew name John, noting that Paul and Barnabas “had John to assist them” (13:5), and when he departs from the mission at Perga, he again is referred to only by his Hebrew name, John, who “left them and returned to Jerusalem” (13:13).

Is it possible that Luke intended to describe John Mark, up to this point, as a man primarily identified by his Hebrew heritage and, as a result, a man not yet ready to embrace the Gentile initiative? Did Luke intend to use only his Hebrew name at the point of departure, as an indication of his self-identity? Interestingly, Deissmann admits that Luke’s usage of the single name “John” (Ἰωάννης) in Acts 13:13 “has been used purposely,” but then suggests that his usage of only “Mark” in Acts 15:39 “may be accidental or on purpose.”²⁸ Not only is such analysis presumptuous, it is also dangerous. For, in the Bible, all things are intentional and on purpose.²⁹

After the Jerusalem Council, when Paul and Barnabas decide to return on a second mission, Barnabas again desires to take John Mark with them, but this time Luke refers to him by the slightly modified form, “John called Mark” (15:37). This is not a mirror reference to his earlier dual reference to both names (12:12, 25) and, interestingly, this time Luke uses the participle form of καλέω, which indicates that the individual here is “called by, addressed as, or

²⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 373.

²⁸ G. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2010), 317.

²⁹ Many thanks to Dr. Daniel Sheard for his many contributions to my research and particularly on this unique perspective.

designated” by *both names*.³⁰ In other words, the Hebrew name John (Ἰωάννης) here no longer appears to hold priority of identity since he is now called by *both names*. Perhaps here, Luke means to identify John Mark as an individual who had accepted the testimony of his mentor, Peter (Acts 15:7-11), and the decision of the Jerusalem Council to embrace the Gentiles without the requirements of adopting Jewish customs. Perhaps most striking is the name change that occurs after John Mark departs with his cousin Barnabas back to Cyprus (15:39). After this point, he is referred to only by his Greek name “Mark” by Luke, Paul, and even Peter. Did Luke intend to show that Mark had now embraced the Gentile mission fully and had been transformed theologically, as indicated by the manner in which he was referenced? From this perspective, Luke’s use of John Mark’s name does not appear random but rather intentional, reflecting the theological transformation occurring over the course of his life and ministry.

Similar patterns of name use and name order may be evident in the Lukan use of Paul’s name. Although Paul was born a Roman citizen with both his Hebrew name, Saul, and Greek name, Paul,³¹ Luke apparently shifts his name strategically within the narrative. Many might guess that Luke would shift Saul’s name to Paul after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), but in striking fashion Luke withholds the transfer of names until Acts 13:13, exactly when John Mark departs from them at Perga! What key shift in the narrative, if any, would Luke have attempted to highlight by this textual clue? Interestingly, it is at this juncture that Paul initiates his ministry to the Gentiles at Pisidian Antioch (13:46), connecting Paul’s new identity with his new commission to the Gentiles. F. C. Baur has linked Luke’s shift

³⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 502.

³¹ McRay, 26.

of Paul's name as based on his "first important apostolic act,"³² in the conversion of the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus, thus linking the transition to the events that precede it. However, it appears that, more than often, a biblical change in name will point to the events that *succeed* the event. For example, in the changing of Abraham's name, the basis is on a future promise (Gen. 17:3-6), as is the changing of Peter's name, in which Jesus declares the future building of His church (Matt. 16:18-19). So also, it would seem most consistent to identify Paul's new identity with the mission that will soon unfold to the Gentiles. Thus, three textual clues converge in Acts 13:13 at a single point: 1) the use of only John in John Mark's name, 2) the change in Saul's name to Paul and, 3) the word order of Paul as primary in the group. As such, every indication points to John Mark's departure from the mission as a critical moment in the narrative.

II.C. A Chronological Proposal

Understanding the ripples created by Mark's proposed defection require an analysis of Luke's chronology in order to best understand the tensions that unfolded between the largely Gentile church at Antioch, and the church at Jerusalem, which stood as the primary seat of the early Christian church. After his conversion and prior to the events leading up to the first missionary journey, Paul had met with the disciples in Jerusalem in order to determine his place in the church, but was unsuccessful because they were afraid of him (Acts 9:26).

Chronologically, it seems most likely that a span of several years transpired between his ministering in Damascus and his return to Jerusalem (Acts 9:23). Darrell Bock notes that a delay in Paul's return to Jerusalem by several years best explains the skepticism he received at the hands of the Jerusalem church, who would have likely reasoned that a real conversion would

³² F. C. Baur, *Paul: The Apostle of Jesus Christ*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 96.

have resulted in an immediate return.³³ As such, it would frame the initial tension between Paul's mission and the Jerusalem church that would later erupt after Mark's departure. As the years passed for Paul with no word of inclusion or support from the Jerusalem leaders, "it is not difficult to imagine Paul feeling that he had been marginalized by his Jewish brothers in Judea, who did not yet understand that it was time for the Gentiles to be enthusiastically evangelized, and that they were to be accepted without conversion to Judaism as a prerequisite (Acts 15:1)."³⁴ During Paul's "silent years," while ministering in Tarsus and Cilicia, Peter was the first person called into account for preaching to a Gentile (Acts 11:2-3), an indication that this was not only the first occurrence, but also a possible clue inserted by Luke to lay the groundwork for the Gentile controversy that would soon erupt in Paul's ministry. Luke may have intended to use the conversion of Cornelius as an apology that would be later used at the Jerusalem council "as decisive evidence of the acceptance of the Gentiles by God."³⁵ Indeed, it would appear that the key issue within the Cornelius story centers around Gentile eligibility and the need to set aside old Jewish prejudices, "especially those relating to particularism and privilege within Christianity."³⁶ Within the sequence of events, the Cornelius event thus appears to set the stage for the controversy that will soon unfold in Antioch and be addressed at Jerusalem.

Luke first introduces John Mark as a member of his mother's home church in Jerusalem, praying for the release of Peter (Acts 12:12). Later, he joins Paul and his cousin Barnabas as they return to the church at Antioch (12:25), where the trio sets off on their first missionary journey.

³³ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 369.

³⁴ McRay, 98.

³⁵ Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, Heinrich Greeven, ed. (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1999), 109.

³⁶ J. Julius Scott, Jr., "The Cornelius Incident in the Light of its Jewish Setting," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 4 (December, 1991), 475-484.

Commissioned by the church at Antioch, they depart for Barnabas' home island of Cyprus and begin to preach in the synagogues (13:2-5). After a brief stay, they set sail for the mainland at Asia Minor where it is possible that Paul revealed to Barnabas and John Mark that the Gospel would not only be offered to the Gentiles, but that it would be done so through limited and qualified Torah observance. The conversion of the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus (13:12), may have had an impact on Paul's missionary agenda. It is striking that Luke notes this conversion in the verse immediately preceding John Mark's departure. If Paul indeed revealed this new plan to his team, then it is feasible that, upon their arrival at Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark, who could not accept Paul's new agenda, left them and returned to Jerusalem (13:13). Interestingly, Mark chooses to return to Jerusalem, the site of his Jewish roots and home church, and not to Antioch, the church who had commissioned them. If, indeed, John Mark departed from the first missionary journey because he disagreed with Paul's decision to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles apart from the traditional practice of submission to the Torah, then his return to Jerusalem, and not Antioch, may have meant to report on Paul's new Gentile agenda and perhaps garner advocates for his position.³⁷ Perhaps his report motivated a specific group of Jews, mentioned in Acts 15:1, to make their way to Antioch to challenge Paul's theology (and authority). It is also likely that, upon Mark's return to Jerusalem, he found a church that had shifted in its views on the Gentiles while he was at Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

Although there were clearly Christian Jews that held to the requirements of the Mosaic law for Gentiles (11:2, 15:1), Peter's report of his vision at Joppa (10:9-16), his preaching to Cornelius (10:34-43), and the resulting Jewish witness of glossolalia that befell the Gentiles

³⁷ Ben Witherington III also leaves the possibility that Mark's return to Jerusalem, and not to Antioch, was for the purpose of "reporting on this new venture." *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 404.

(10:44-48) may have left the Jerusalem church, and the circumcision group that challenged him, more sympathetic to the Gentile cause. This would also explain why the leaders at Jerusalem decided in favor of Paul's new vision for the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-21). Thus, it would appear that, by the time of the convening of the Jerusalem Council, the majority of church leaders had come to accept Christ as the fulfillment of the law. This would not be just for practical reasons, (the inability to keep the law and be circumcised), but because, theologically, Christ fulfills the demands of the law.

After Mark's departure, Paul and Barnabas headed for Pisidian Antioch, where they once again began to preach at the synagogue. But this time, because of their rejection of their preaching, Paul and Barnabas declare that they will now offer the Gospel freely to the Gentiles (13:46). Upon their return to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas delivered the good news of how the "door of faith" had now been open to the Gentiles (14:27). These events appear to best coincide chronologically with the events surrounding Paul's confrontation with Peter, described in Galatians 2:11-14, in which Peter came to Antioch, initially receiving the Gentile members in open fellowship, only to withdraw when Jews from the Jerusalem Church came. If the events described in Gal. 2:11-14 occurred prior to the Jerusalem council, this would then place Paul's visit described in Gal. 2:1 as his second visit, likely his "famine visit," prior to his third visit to the Jerusalem council.³⁸ Peter's actions led even Barnabas astray, an indication that even Barnabas had not fully embraced Paul's theology concerning the Gentiles. This event incited heated dissension, resulting in Paul and Barnabas being appointed to go to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders to resolve this question in what is now known as the Jerusalem council.

³⁸ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, ed. (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 46.

It was at Jerusalem where the central argument would emerge, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (15:1). This verse forms a major chronological juncture in Luke’s narrative, for although the first fourteen chapters only offer glimpses of the emerging Jewish-Gentile controversy, primarily in the Cornelius event, it is at this point that the Gentile issue comes to the forefront and forms the structural and theological center of Acts.³⁹ As such, if Mark was present at the Jerusalem Council, as he likely was, the decision to accept the new Gentile missionary agenda would have reopened the door for Mark to rejoin Paul and Barnabas with a clear conscience, as indicated by his second missionary journey taken with Barnabas (Acts 15:37). But before the events leading up to the Jerusalem Council can be understood, first a careful reexamination of the Jewish perspective on Gentiles within the first-century socio-cultural context is in order.

III. The Gentile Mission Reexamined: Greeks, Hellenists, and “God-fearers”

When the new mission of evangelization to the Gentiles erupted in the early church, it was Paul that stood front and center of the controversy. F. F. Bruce properly notes that “the cleavage between Jew and Gentile was for Judaism the most radical within the human race.”⁴⁰ Although evangelization to the Gentiles, per se, was not foreign to the Jewish agenda, it was the invitation to accept the Gospel and join the Christian Church *apart from the adoption of the Mosaic Law* that rocked many traditional Jewish Christians, and no one was more equipped for the challenge than Paul. Paul not only lived and taught in the midst of his socio-cultural settings,

³⁹ I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 5. Leon Morris, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 256-257.

⁴⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary, I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasue, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1982), 188.

his ministry and theology were very likely *directly affected by them*. Schreiner has properly noted that “Paul made a lasting impact precisely because he tackled the specific circumstances in the churches from a worldview that was powerfully coherent.”⁴¹ Perhaps it was this background and influence that Paul spoke of when he said that the mystery of the Gospel that God revealed to him was in the stewardship (οἰκονομία) given to him for the Gentiles (Eph. 3:2). In other words, although Paul’s background must be acknowledged as part of God’s plan of redemption for the Gentiles, it was ultimately Paul’s revelation of Jesus Christ that shifted his theology. Hengel notes that Paul’s encounter with the risen Christ led him to recognize that “the way to salvation indicated by the Torah and God’s crucified Messiah must inevitably stand in fundamental opposition.”⁴²

Paul was raised in a “rich educational milieu” at Tarsus, a city steeped in Stoicism that served as an “important educational center in the ancient world.”⁴³ Understanding Paul’s richly diverse cultural background may also help in understanding John Mark’s departure from the first Pauline missionary journey, for if it was theologically motivated, based on his conviction that the Gentile conversion required adoption of the Mosaic Law, then Paul’s early exposure to Greco-Roman culture in Cilicia, as opposed to Mark’s more rigid Hebrew background in Jerusalem, may have played a significant role in the matter. Additionally, because Paul’s teacher, Gamaliel, subscribed to the Hillel view, which took “a more commonsense approach to matters” than the Shammai school of thought, Paul was more able to adapt the inclusion of the Gentiles in the new faith by making “the necessary adjustments to embrace the new circumstances.”⁴⁴ However,

⁴¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 39.

⁴² Hengel, 83-84.

⁴³ McRay, 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

something bigger was at stake, for Paul, more than anyone, understood the diversity that existed behind both the Jewish and Gentile identity. Bultmann notes, “The historical presupposition for Paul’s theology is not the kerygma of the oldest Church but that of the Hellenistic Church.”⁴⁵ Thus, when the Gentile question was reexamined, Paul emerged as its champion, aligning more with the Jewish Hellenists, and yet more at odds with more traditional Jews, such as John Mark.

If Gentiles had already been allowed within Judaism, then why would this issue now stir up so much controversy? Two answers stand at the fore. First, Paul challenged the traditional belief of Torah observance as the standard marker of the covenant relationship with God, who now insisted that the new identifying marker was by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:28-29). However, it is likely that some Jewish Christians felt that “identity within the Mosaic covenant should take precedence over identity in Christ,”⁴⁶ and thus viewed any members who did not honor this tradition as less than equals. Second, up until the first Pauline mission, Gentile proselytes consisted of only a small minority in Judaism. Perhaps up to this point the church leaders did not see a need for a unified theological position concerning Gentiles, but circumstances quickly changed when Gentiles became more prominent, especially at Antioch, where its members were predominantly, but not exclusively, Gentile.⁴⁷ Suddenly, the church seemed to encounter the great question of determining how to define the people of God. Simply put, the church now faced an identity crisis. What made this question even more challenging was that there already existed a wide diversity of people within the Christian church, both Jew and Gentile, and each with their different measures of identity.

⁴⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, translated by Kendrick Grobel, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 63.

⁴⁶ Jerry L. Sumney, *Paul: Apostle and Fellow Traveler*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 42.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

First century Palestine was not simply divided between the broad classes of Jews and Gentiles. Rather, there existed different classes of both Jews and Gentiles, and it appears that these classes were primarily divided over the role of the Torah in the life of the individual. For example, Luke differentiates between Aramaic-speaking Jews, identified as “Hebrews,” and Greek-speaking Jews, identified as “Hellenists” (Acts 6:1). The differentiation of Gentiles was largely dependent upon their status within the Jewish community. Gentiles, in general, were identified as “Greeks” (Gal. 3:28), while covenant members were regarded as either proselytes (προσήλυτος), Gentiles who had converted through full submission of the Torah, including circumcision (Acts 2:11), or “Godfearers” (θεοσεβής or φοβούμενος τὸν Θεόν), Gentiles who had adopted Judaism but without full submission to Torah, especially circumcision (Acts 10:2). This did not imply that Gentile “Godfearers” lived *completely* Law-free, since they were expected to at least adhere to the seven universal laws that comprised the Noachic Law.⁴⁸ However, in the eyes of many traditional Jews, the observance of the Noachic Law without circumcision and full observance of the Law meant that “Godfearers” remained as second-class citizens and thus still treated as Gentiles in table fellowship. It is notable that, while proselytes were buried in the Jewish cemeteries, both in Jerusalem and throughout the Diaspora, “Godfearers” were not, a clear mark of separation between the two groups.⁴⁹ Thus, it seems apparent that “Godfearers” were seen as inferior to the Torah-observant Jewish-Christians.

Clearly, “there were different opinions regarding the role the Torah had to play in the lives of those who believed in Jesus, and these opinions were held by *both* Jewish and Gentile

⁴⁸ Michelle Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century C.E.: Communion and Conflict*, The Sheffield Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series. Stanley E. Porter, ed. (New York, NY: T & T Clark International, 2003), 21.

⁴⁹ Hengel, 89.

believers.”⁵⁰ Thus, what we appear to find in our analysis of first-century relations between Jews and Gentiles are clear splinters that existed within both groups. The biblical text not only differentiates between traditional Jews who rejected Jesus and Christian Jews. One also finds Aramaic-speaking Jews, regarded as “Hebrews,” and Greek-speaking Jews known as “Hellenists” (Acts 6:1), who were apparently divided over much more than language. While the traditional Jews and Christian Jews were divided over Jesus, it appears that Hebrews and Hellenists were divided over the function of the Torah, especially in regard to Gentile table fellowship. For Hellenists, fellowship was extended and shared with both Gentile proselytes and “Godfearers,” while the “Hebrews” drew the line at fellowship with only those Gentiles who had submitted to circumcision and Torah observance. Hence, one might acknowledge three separate groups of Gentiles in the eyes of the Jews—Gentile non-believers (a group all Jews avoided), Gentile proselytes (a group both the Hebrews and Hellenists accepted in table fellowship), and “Godfearers” (a group that only the Hellenists permitted in table fellowship at the time). Of these groups, John Mark would likely have most identified with the Hebrews of the “circumcision group” (Col. 4:11). Thus, the question must be asked, how is it possible that Jewish Christians could hold such varying views on their election and identity? To this question we now turn.

III.A. Election and Identity within Second Temple Judaism

One cannot truly appreciate the different factions present within the Jewish-Gentile controversy without first understanding what Jews, at the time, believed about election and identity as God’s chosen people. When Paul petitioned for the inclusion of Gentiles in the emerging Christian church, apart from the requirements of the Mosaic Law, something greater

⁵⁰ Slee, 10.

than racial prejudice or theological preference was at stake (although these issues were certainly present!) Rather, it was the identity as God's people by adherence to the covenantal law that appeared to dominate the landscape of Jewish thought in Paul's day. Thus, the culture surrounding the Jewish-Gentile controversy was much more volatile than simply a division based on theological principles or cultural biases. Instead, for Jews of the "circumcision party" (Acts 11:2, 15:5; Phil. 3:2), the issue may have been fundamental to the question of election and what it meant to be identified as God's people.

The prevailing Jewish literature at the time appears to reflect a predominant Jewish perspective that defined the elect of God on both conditional and unconditional elements.⁵¹ The striking point here is that election in Second Temple Judaism reflects, less a "works-based" righteousness, and more a righteousness that depends on both God's grace *and the necessity of keeping the covenant promises by adhering to the Law*.⁵² As such, both election and identity appear to have been clearly demarcated by the covenant, i.e., obedience to the Mosaic Law. From this perspective, Paul's new agenda to the Gentiles, as no longer entailing submission to the Law, would have shocked many traditional Jews who believed that *both individual and corporate election* were primarily identified by the covenantal law. In other words, Paul's new mission would have undoubtedly threatened, not only the traditional methods of Gentile proselytization, but also the Jewish notion of election and what it meant to be a member of God's covenant community, *both nationally and individually*. Contrary to popular belief, Judaism appears to have encompassed, not only national election, but also individual identity, based upon

⁵¹ A. Chadwick Thornhill, *The Chosen People: Election, Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 41.

⁵² Although numerous works have progressed this discussion, it was E. P. Sanders who spearheaded this view away from the traditional belief of Judaism as a works-based faith through his concept of "covenantal nomism" in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, (Philadelphia, PN: Fortress Press, 1977).

faithfulness to the Mosaic covenant. Simply put, Second Temple Judaism viewed their national election as something based upon the unconditional grace of God, while individual election was based upon the conditional obedience to the covenant law. E. P. Sanders notes, “Physical descent is the basis of the election, and the election is the basis of salvation, but physical descent from Jacob is not the sole condition of salvation.”⁵³ Thus, for many Jews, the Gentile invitation to join the church apart from adherence to the Mosaic Law was an invitation that was absent of the individual, conditional element of the covenant.

Contrary to the popular assumption that Second Temple Judaism viewed Gentiles as excluded from the covenant community and all ethnic Jews as automatically included, the Jewish literature appears to paint a different picture. In actuality, the Gentile community was regularly accepted into the Jewish community as proselytes, with varying degrees of acceptance dependent upon their levels of submission to Torah (i.e., circumcision, dietary laws, etc.). In the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the rules for membership in the covenant community (*Community Rule*), stated that atonement could only be found by the covenant, and that even outsiders (Gentiles) could enter into the covenant if they submitted to obeying its ordinances (1QS 3.7-12). For many Jews, membership in the covenant community could also mean exclusion of ethnic Jews, since election was conditionally dependent upon submission and obedience to the covenantal law. Thus, leading up to the Gentile controversy that emerged at Antioch, Gentile admission to the covenantal community seems consistently based on adherence to the Torah. From this perspective, John Mark may have viewed Paul’s new Gentile agenda as an unacceptable breach of Judaism. Indeed, for Mark, admitting Gentiles as full members without the requirements as

⁵³ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, (Philadelphia, PN: Fortress Press, 1977), 368.

proselytes may have “smacked of abandoning the law as the guide for how God’s people should live to be faithful to the covenant.”⁵⁴

Although the Torah appears as the consistent measure of the covenant community, it also appears that the literature of Second Temple Judaism “contributed different, and sometimes contradictory, pictures of what defined God’s people,”⁵⁵ especially in regards to Gentiles. For example, traditional Rabbinic Jews, such as the Pharisees, insisted that Gentiles were “under obligation to keep the whole Jewish Law,” while Hellenistic Judaism held to the belief that circumcision and the keeping of the cultic commandments was not as crucial as belief in one God and following “the basic ethical demands of the OT.”⁵⁶ The term Ἕλληνην “always means a Greek of Gentile origin,”⁵⁷ and was a general term used to describe Gentiles in relation to Jewish identity, whereas the Ἑλληνιστῆς referred to a Greek-speaking Jew.⁵⁸

In Gal. 3:28, Paul declares that there is “neither Jew nor Greek,” and uses the term Ἕλληνην to refer to Greeks in general. It is possible that Paul uses the three couplets in this section (Greeks, slaves, and women) in order to counter the three *bērākôt*, or benedictions, that Jews recited in their morning prayers, “Blessed be He [God] that He did not make me a Gentile; blessed be He that He did not make me a boor [slave]; blessed be He that He did not make me a woman.”⁵⁹ The Gentile proselyte (Προσήλυτος) was a term used to denote the Gentile who became a full Jew completing a three-part rite of circumcision, baptism and the offering of a

⁵⁴ Sumney, 99.

⁵⁵ Thornhill, 99.

⁵⁶ Karl G. Kuhn, “προσήλυτος” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI. Gerhard Friedrich, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. and ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1968), 739.

⁵⁷ Longenecker, *Galatians* 157.

⁵⁸ F. F. Bruce, 111.

⁵⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 157.

sacrifice in the temple.⁶⁰ William Barclay notes that, after completing the first two requirements, the man would be baptized, where he would make a confession of faith before three men, called “fathers of baptism,” portions of the law would be read to him, blessings would be pronounced and, when he emerged, would become a member of the Jewish faith, in accord with the Levitical rites of purification (Lev. 11-15).⁶¹ However, despite the opportunity for Gentiles to cross the gulf that existed between Jews and Gentiles through proselytization, the gulf often remained.⁶² Distinct from the Gentile proselytes, who submitted to full conversion, were the “God-fearers” (σεβόμενοι or φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν). These Gentiles attended synagogue worship, believed in Jewish monotheism, and kept some part of the ceremonial law, but did not submit to full conversion by circumcision.⁶³

For Paul, election and identity were available for both Jews and Gentiles, but the identifying marker had now shifted from the Mosaic Law to faith in Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-24; 2 Cor. 5:14-21). Paul did not invent these concepts of corporate election and identity, since they already existed in Judaism, but the significance of the work of Christ, for Paul, completely “recalibrated” them.⁶⁴ In Romans 4:9-12, Paul not only declares Abraham’s election and righteousness as separate from the Torah, but as “the father of all who believe without being circumcised” (v. 11), inverting the traditional Jewish view of Abraham, making him “the first Gentile convert whom God declared “right” apart from keeping the law.”⁶⁵ Thus, Paul’s point on

⁶⁰ Kuhn, 738.

⁶¹ William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, The New Daily Study Bible, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 38.

⁶² Bruce, 188.

⁶³ Kuhn, 731.

⁶⁴ Thornhill, 58.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

election and identity is clear—the fulfillment of God’s plan for the elect could only come about outside of the law, not within it, since the law was intended to separate Jews from Gentiles, while in Christ, God is one (Gal. 3:20). Thus, Paul was not necessarily attacking Jewish legalism, *per se*, but rather the attitude of Jewish exclusivism,⁶⁶ that rejected the idea that all were now justified by faith in Christ. Krister Stendahl has rightfully argued that Paul’s argument concerning the Jewish-Gentile situation was not secondary to his concept of justification by faith. Rather, “Paul was chiefly concerned about the relation between Jews and Gentiles—and in the development of *this* concern he used as one of his arguments the idea of justification by faith.”⁶⁷

For many ethnic Jews, this teaching would seriously challenge the standard for Jewish election and identity, and the factors which determine membership in the covenantal community. For example, the law of circumcision was not merely an ethnic symbol of identity but, according to *Jubilees*, a “prerequisite for covenant membership” that would render both Gentiles and compromising Jews who rejected it as violators of the covenant destined for destruction (Jub. 15:25-34). Paul countered by offering Christian baptism as a natural progression of this OT form, where the individual now entered into a union with Christ through baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). Paul argued that Gentiles are marked spiritually, “not by the outward symbol of circumcision but rather by the greater sign of the Spirit.”⁶⁸ Thus, for Paul to ask his Jewish opponents to allow Gentiles to enter into the covenant community apart from circumcision was not only a challenge to their views on Gentile membership, but also a direct challenge to their own identities as covenant members! However, it must be noted that the theological message within Scripture, and

⁶⁶ Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology, E. Ray Clendenen, ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 6.

⁶⁷ Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, (Philadelphia, PN: Fortress Press, 1978), 3.

⁶⁸ Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 259.

especially within Acts, was not that God was abandoning the Jewish people, but rather that God was “redefining the nature of his people.”⁶⁹ Was this redefinition the primary concern of the circumcision party leading up to the Council of Jerusalem? Did these questions ring in John Mark’s ears when he first heard of Paul’s new mission to the Gentiles at Pamphylia? If so, then the warning bells would have been first rung within the axis of Gentile Christianity in the first century—the Antioch Church.

III.B. The Church at Antioch

When the conflict over the requirements for Gentile admission into the church erupted, it was at Antioch where the hub of controversy seemed to occur. If the Jerusalem Church was the center of the Jewish Christian movement, then it was the Antioch Church that served as the wellspring of Gentile Christianity. It is at Antioch where the disciples are first called “Christians” (Acts 11:26), another clear indication that the group at this church was markedly different in identity from the predominantly Jewish Christian communities. It is also at Antioch where Luke reintroduces Paul into his narrative following his conversion. When the church in Jerusalem receives report of the large number of Gentiles being converted at Antioch, they commission Barnabas to go Antioch (11:22). Perhaps he was sent to provide encouragement and support to the apostolic work, or perhaps he was charged with ensuring that appropriate table fellowship practices were being observed. Considering that Luke made a point to note that both a great number of conversions occurred at Antioch (v. 21) *and* that those conversions occurred precisely when the Gospel message turned from strictly Jews (v. 19) to the Greeks (v. 20), it is likely that Barnabas was commissioned with both duties in mind. After witnessing the great

⁶⁹ Steve Walton, “Acts,” *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 76.

work that was happening at Antioch, Barnabas sought out Paul (at the time called Saul) in Tarsus in order to recruit him to assist with the work. Although Paul had already been preaching the Gospel in Tarsus, his call to Antioch indirectly reconnects him with the formal church in Jerusalem. From the perspective of the great evangelistic work towards the Gentiles and the recruitment of Paul by Barnabas, Antioch appears to emerge as a major pillar in the life of the early church, drawing “directly and powerfully from Greco-Roman culture as it did from Jewish culture.”⁷⁰ Thus, in contrast to the church at Jerusalem, Antioch would appear to occupy a distinguished place in the early Christian church movement because it “refused to be confined within the narrow limits of Judaism.”⁷¹

Of particular interest to this theme is the fact that, when John Mark departed from the first missionary journey, he did not return to Antioch, the site of their missionary departure. Instead, he returned to Jerusalem, where a report was possibly given to the leaders at Jerusalem of Paul’s activities in Antioch and Asia Minor. Is it merely a coincidence that Luke seemingly placed these two churches at odds within John Mark’s activities, or did he intend to use Mark’s actions to set the stage for the two competing hubs of controversy? Although some scholars have rejected the notion that there existed a “gulf between Jewish and Gentile Christianity,”⁷² the evidence to prove otherwise seems overwhelming. Not only do Paul’s letters, and especially Galatians, detail the tension that existed between these two churches, Luke offers more than sufficient evidence to reveal that the question of Gentile Christian relations was foremost in the minds of early church leaders.

⁷⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 131.

⁷¹ C. H. Thomson, “Antioch” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, James Orr, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1939), 157.

⁷² Bock, 520.

An important document that displays the varying positions between the churches at Antioch and Jerusalem is the *Didache*, an early manuscript, likely written at Antioch, that offers basic instructions on baptism and ethics for Gentiles entering into the church. The *Didache* reveals that the parties responsible for writing them were opposed by, and themselves oppose, a rival sect within Judaism that insisted on retaining the requirements for Gentile submission to the Torah in order to enter into the covenant community.⁷³ It also reveals that, although the Torah was no longer mandatory at Antioch, the Hellenists were still teaching and insisting on Gentile transformation and adherence to the universal Noachic Laws for the purpose of appropriating Jewish-Gentile table fellowship.

The Antioch church plays a major role in Luke's narrative, particularly in the persecution that arises following Stephen's martyrdom. When Stephen (one of the seven deacons chosen) is stoned by the Jews and a great persecution arises against the church (8:1), it is primarily the Hellenist Christians, and not the Hebrew Christians, who feel the wrath and flee the persecution. This critical event in the church reveals two crucial factors that must be considered in light of the Jewish-Gentile controversy: 1) the persecution of the Hellenist Jews may have been more about the compromise of the Torah (in the eyes of traditional Jews) in regards to Gentile fellowship than the belief in Jesus as Messiah and, 2) the dispersion of the Hellenists from Jerusalem may have only served to increase the chasm that already existed between both groups and especially between the church at Jerusalem and those who escaped the persecution and founded the church at Antioch (11:19). From the perspective of the traditional Jews, the actions of the Hellenists' open table fellowship with Gentiles, in some ways, would have seemed a greater threat than those Hebrews who had accepted Jesus as Messiah. For the Hellenists who were driven out of

⁷³ Slee, 8.

Jerusalem and started the church at Antioch, they would likely have naturally gone “beyond the circle of full Jews...to Gentiles who were interested in Judaism,”⁷⁴ placing them in direct opposition to the churches in Jewish Palestine. How does one view John Mark in the midst of such turmoil? John Mark was native to Jerusalem and brought up in its church (12:12), he was clearly educated in the synagogue and proficient in writing,⁷⁵ and would have most certainly attended the Hebrew services. Additionally, his remaining in Jerusalem with the Hebrews following the persecution gives every indication that it was only a matter of time before John Mark’s theology sat crossways with Paul’s new Gentile agenda.

III.C. An Analysis of Galatians 3:19-29 in Response to the Judaizers

Of all the Pauline epistles, Galatians stands as the only letter possibly written immediately following the first missionary journey and prior to the Jerusalem Council. As such, Galatians stands a unique source of potential insight into the events surrounding John Mark’s departure and the Jewish-Gentile controversy that erupted soon after. The long-debated issue over the dating of Galatians is based largely on whether one subscribes to a South or North Galatian hypothesis. Although space forbids broader discussion, the South Galatian view that “it might be possible to date Galatians before the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15:6ff”⁷⁶ seems most convincing. An earlier dating also helps explain why Paul does not appeal to the Council’s ruling not to impose circumcision on Gentile converts in his epistle and, when aligned with the aforementioned chronological proposal, the events described in Galatians, leading up to the

⁷⁴ Hengel, 75.

⁷⁵ Not only is Mark’s Gospel generally regarded to be the product of his work as Peter’s amanuensis, but his description as Paul and Barnabas’ ὑπηρέτης (assistant) gives indication that his function may have been as one of a more formal capacity, such as record keeper. BDAG, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1035.

⁷⁶ Bruce, 44.

Jerusalem Council, become more lucid. The churches in Galatia, were being pressured by a group of Jewish leaders from Jerusalem to adopt the Jewish rites of proselytization and influenced to believe that true membership as children of Abraham could only come about by submission to circumcision and a life of Torah-based observance. Paul responds with a heavy reliance on the OT, second only to Romans in proportionate use with at least ten formal citations in six chapters,⁷⁷ in order to prove to his Jewish opponents that his evangelism to the Gentiles was not only permissible, but also based on the Torah's salvation history.

Although some scholars view Paul's excursus in Galatians 3:19-29 as a "digression on the Torah" that contains a series of "very concise and unconnected statements,"⁷⁸ it would be a mistake to view this section as incidental. For, in this section, "Paul comes to the heart of his differences with the Judaizers,"⁷⁹ by arguing that submission to the Torah had now been replaced by faith in Jesus Christ as the agency of salvation, an idea that stood in stark contrast to traditional Judaism and the belief that the Torah was the eternal form of obtaining righteousness with God. Paul begins this pericope with an indefinite temporal clause, ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθη τὸ σπέρμα, arguing that the true purpose of the law actually increased "the sum-total of transgression."⁸⁰ His declaration in v. 20 that "God is one" has produced numerous possible interpretations. However, the solution may be found in his later statement, in v. 28, that all are "one in Christ Jesus." This may indicate that Moses, the mediator of the Mosaic Law, represented a division of parties, while Christ has united all as one party. Paul argues that "any transaction in which a mediator is

⁷⁷ Moises Silva, "Galatians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 785.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=3117030>.

⁷⁸ Hans D. Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, (Philadelphia, PN: Fortress Press, 1979), 163.

⁷⁹ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 136.

⁸⁰ Bruce, 175.

involved is inferior to one in which God acts directly.”⁸¹ From a temporal view, the implication is that, where once we were divided by the Law, we are now made as one in Christ. Paul’s argument here does not stand in contrast to Judaic thought, for his argument echoed the Shema, that “God is one” (Deut. 6:4), and would have served to remind his opposition of God’s original eschatological plan of salvation.

In v. 21, Paul clarifies that, although the Law does not stand in contrast to the promises of God,⁸² it is incapable of providing what the Judaizers claim it can do—give life. Paul here argues against the common Rabbinic teaching, that the one who follows the Law “will find life by them” (Sir. 17:11; *’Abot* 2.8).⁸³ However, this does not imply that the Law stands in contrast to God, for Paul’s voluntative optative expression *μὴ γένοιτο* at the beginning of the verse emphatically denies such implications. Rather, Paul offers a second-class conditional statement in which the protasis describes the limitations of the Law’s ability to impart life by the complementary adverbial infinitive phrase, *ὁ δυνάμενος ζῶσθαι*, and further adds its limitations to produce righteousness by the use of, *ἂν ἦν ἡ δικαιοσύνη*. Paul now reveals that the source of true life is found, not in the Torah, but in Jesus Christ. Whether the genitive construction, *ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, should be viewed objectively (faith in Christ) or subjectively (faithfulness of Christ), within the aspect of Paul’s temporal argument, the point is that it is Jesus Christ, and not the Law, that serves as the true source of salvation history. Thus,

⁸¹ H. D. Betz, 171-173.

⁸² Although the words *τοῦ Θεοῦ* are absent from several early manuscripts (P⁴⁶, B, Ambrosiaster Marius Victorinus), this may also be due to “an accident in transmission” and are enclosed within brackets. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2016), 526.

⁸³ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 239.

Paul argues that the Law was not only temporal, but temporal *with an intentional purpose*—to lead us to Christ.

Paul’s argument on the temporality of the Law comes to a climax in v. 25, where he argues that, because faith has now arrived, those formerly under the Law are now sons of God by the agency, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, and the means διὰ τῆς πίστεως. The phrase “in Christ” is a Pauline favorite meant “to signal the personal, local, and dynamic relation of the believer to Christ.”⁸⁴ Paul concludes his argument with a first-class conditional statement in which the σπέρμα are now identified with the protasis, εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ. As true descendants of Abraham, made possible by the agency of Christ, they are now the promised heirs. Paul’s argument for the true children of Abraham was a likely response to the view of the Mishnah that considered, even the full Gentile proselyte, as unqualified to call Abraham “father.”⁸⁵

Within the structure of Galatians 3:19-29, there exist four identifiable temporal clauses that help frame Paul’s description of the Mosaic Law’s temporal elements. The first is found in v. 19, where Paul explains that the Law was ordained “until the seed would come.” Here, the subjunctive indefinite temporal clause “indicates a future contingency,”⁸⁶ thus illustrating that, although the Mosaic Law was temporal, it was also intentional, leading God’s people to an ultimate objective, that is, Jesus Christ. The preposition ἄχρις serves as a clear “marker of continuous extent of time up to a point,”⁸⁷ with the σπέρμα serving as the connective point between the anticipated event in v. 19, and its arrival in v. 25. The second and third temporal

⁸⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 152.

⁸⁵ R. H. Stein, “The Jerusalem Church Council,” *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 337.

⁸⁶ Wallace, 479.

⁸⁷ W. Arndt, Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 160.

clauses are found in v. 23, in which Paul speaks “in a pointedly temporal fashion,”⁸⁸ by noting that the Law performed its function as a “custodian” until faith arrived, describing a new phase of God’s salvation history. Paul uses παιδαγωγός as an intentional metaphor aimed at demonstrating the temporal function of the Law, in the same way that a custodian, or tutor, would care for an adolescent only until they reached late adolescence.⁸⁹ Here, Paul aims to reveal that the Law did its duty, but only *until* faith would come, that is, faith in Jesus Christ. Within this context, εἰς is translated temporally (“until”), a notably rare use of this preposition in Pauline style.⁹⁰ The fourth, and final, temporal clause within this pericope is found in v. 25, the concluding verse. Here, Paul resolves the anticipation initially set forth in v. 19, by announcing that, indeed, faith has now arrived. The promised seed, identified as πίστις, is Christ, and His arrival has revealed the temporal elements of the Law and now ushered in “the era of faith.”⁹¹

Until his encounter with Christ, Paul would have undoubtedly held a similarly eternal view of the Torah, but his theology had been radically shaken in his encounter with Christ. Paul now viewed the Mosaic Law as functioning within a temporal epoch until the coming of Christ, and this view would have undoubtedly deviated widely from that of traditional Judaism.⁹² What Paul argued in Gal. 3:19-29 would have seemed astonishing to the Jews who heard it, for traditional Judaism held the Torah as “the law that endures forever” (Bar 4:1).⁹³ It seems

⁸⁸ Benjamin Schliesser, “‘Christ-Faith’ as an Eschatological Event (Galatians 3.23-26): A ‘Third View’ on Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 38, no. 3 (2016): 283. sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav.

⁸⁹ Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30, E. Ray Clendenen, ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1994), 265.

⁹⁰ Keener, *Galatians*, 289n.

⁹¹ Scot McKnight, *Galatians*, The NIV Application Commentary, Terry Muck, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 182.

⁹² Longenecker, *Galatians* 139.

⁹³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Clinton E. Arnold, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 241.

apparent that this was a basis for the Judaizers' insistence that the Galatians adopt the covenant of circumcision and subscribe to the Torah. Paul countered by insisting that the Torah should serve only "up to the time that people could put their trust in Jesus Christ."⁹⁴ Paul did not merely insist on the Law as temporal, as a type of isolated event in history, but rather placed it in relation to the progress of salvation history.⁹⁵ The brilliance behind Paul's new theology lay, not only in its ceasing to be a necessity for Gentiles, but also in its redefining of what it meant to be a Jew. Paul challenged his opponents' "ethnic memory" by prioritizing the Abrahamic promise over the Mosaic Law, demonstrating that the true children of Abraham were those who identified themselves, not by observance of the Torah, but by faith in Christ.⁹⁶ The question now posed was, could Jewish and Gentile Christians sit at the table of fellowship in unison and coexist as true children of Abraham?

IV. Rediscovering Jew-Gentile Relations: Table Fellowship and the Eucharist

The foundational problem surrounding Gentile entry into the church was not merely theological, but also based on the real and practical problem of table fellowship. How were Jews supposed to sit at the table of fellowship, drink from the same cup and share the same food, when the Torah specifically forbade such acts? It was in the midst of such challenges that Paul and the Church at Antioch emerged as pioneers in new Jewish-Gentile relations, and particularly within the Eucharist. However, accepting Gentiles freely without regard to the Torah would not be such

⁹⁴ Daniel C. Arichea, Jr. and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1976), 80.

⁹⁵ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Gordon D. Fee, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 169.

⁹⁶ Philip F. Esler, "Paul's Contestation of Israel's (Ethnic) Memory of Abraham in Galatians 3," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 23-34.
http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/apps/doc/A142569511/AONE?u=vic_liberty&sid=AONE&xid=33278689.

a simple matter. Indeed, “because of the nature of the Torah’s purity laws, Jews were almost bound to regard Gentiles as ritually unclean.”⁹⁷ Because Jews viewed idolatry as an abomination, and Gentiles frequently dedicated food and wine to pagan gods, traditional Jews believed that anyone who “took part in such meals were regarded as apostates.”⁹⁸ Even if Gentiles were willing to refrain from food sacrificed to idols, there was still the matter of adhering to the stricter Jewish dietary laws and the sharing of a meal with those who were uncircumcised. To make matters worse, some Jews refused to accept Gentiles *even if they submitted fully to Judaism as a proselyte*. Thus, while traditional Jews were unwilling to make such accommodations, it was at Antioch where the Hellenists were first willing to share in table fellowship with Gentiles who had not fully submitted to the Torah, and yet observed the universal Noachic Laws (Gen. 9:1-17). The unprecedented move was found in the invitation given to Gentiles, who had not submitted to circumcision and Jewish dietary restrictions, to sit at the table of fellowship and share in the same meal.

It is not too difficult to imagine both Jews and Gentiles holding to the view of the Torah as a requirement for church membership, especially in regards to table fellowship. It may well be that the division between the Aramaic-speaking Jewish “Hebrews” and the Jewish Hellenists, mentioned in Acts 6, may well have involved the issue of Gentile contact within the church. Interestingly, the first mention of these two distinct groups is one of dispute (Acts 6:1), a fact that should not be too quickly overlooked. Because the demarcations made between the two groups of Jews was one of language, it is possible that two separate synagogue services were observed, since the Greek-speaking Jews would not have been able to attend the Aramaic

⁹⁷ Stein, 336.

⁹⁸ Slee, 22.

services.⁹⁹ It is also likely that two separate observations of the Eucharist were being practiced by each congregation, each with their own unique set of rules for table fellowship pertaining to Gentiles. Interestingly, the dispute outlined in Acts 6 deals with how the Hellenistic widows were being neglected *in the daily distribution of food*, an indication that the Hebrews may have been unwilling to serve the Hellenists because the dietary restrictions given in the Torah put them in a compromising position.¹⁰⁰ If the Hebrews' neglecting of the widows was based on their restrictions on table fellowship, then it would explain why the seven men chosen were Hellenists, men who were able to serve free from table fellowship restrictions. It would also mean that the selection of the first deacons was primarily motivated not simply to provide table service to the congregation but to also quell the division that existed between Jewish subgroups.

Peter's encounter with Cornelius is instrumental to this theme, and Luke appears to strategically place this narrative in preparation for the events that will unfold both in Paul's first missionary journey and the ensuing Jerusalem council. Though Peter seemed intent on evangelizing strictly to the Jews, he is led by divine guidance to preach to Cornelius, a Gentile "Godfearer" (10:22), and his household. However, before his unprecedented mission, it seems a divine revelation was first needed in order to prepare Peter to visit a Gentile. While praying on a rooftop in Joppa, Peter sees a vision of both kosher and non-kosher foods brought down on a sheet from heaven and a voice instructing him to "kill and eat" (Acts 10:13). Despite his initial protests, Peter is told that God has now cleansed what was once common (v. 15). The aorist active indicative, "to cleanse" (καθαρίζω), indicates that what was once unclean has now been cleansed by God. Although the vision served as reference to Jewish food restrictions, Peter is

⁹⁹ Slee, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Philip F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivation of Lucan Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 159-160.

able to discern that “its range is much wider,”¹⁰¹ when he later tells Cornelius, “God has shown me that I should not call any *person* common or unclean” (v. 28). In the broader vision, Peter understands that “it is men and women, even Gentiles, whose hearts [Christ] has cleansed by faith,”¹⁰² and this is affirmed by his (and other Jews present with him) witnessing of the Gentiles’ reception of the Holy Spirit and the resulting glossolalia *apart from circumcision* and *prior to* receiving baptism (Acts 10:44-48). It is oft overlooked that, of all the instances of people filled with the Holy Spirit, only two instances of resulting glossolalia are clearly narrated by Luke. First, the initial arrival and reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, affirming the initiation of the Jewish-Christian church (2:4), and second, the reception of the Holy Spirit by Cornelius and his household, affirming the eligibility of the Gentiles within the Christian movement apart from circumcision (10:44-48).¹⁰³ Thus, Luke’s account of Peter’s vision and encounter with Cornelius appears to be aimed less at the preaching to the Gentiles, per se, and more at the open table fellowship between Jew and Gentile now made available by God. Later, when Peter gives an account to the “circumcision group,” who questions his table fellowship with Gentiles, Luke aims to show that Peter’s actions are controversial, not because he preached to Gentiles, but because “he dares to share a meal with them.”¹⁰⁴

An analysis of Galatians 2:11-14 also reveals that the confrontation between Paul and Peter at Antioch was specifically over table fellowship. Paul shares how, when Peter came to

¹⁰¹ Bruce, 206.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Contrary to the view of many Charismatics, glossolalia is not universally endorsed in Scripture as a requisite for possession of the Holy Spirit, but rather seems to point to these two unique events with a theological purpose in mind. Indeed, the majority of NT references to being filled with the Holy Spirit do not include glossolalia (Luke 1:41, 1:67, 4:1; Acts 4:8, 4:31, 7:55, 9:17, 13:9). For more thorough discussion on this subject, see James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, (Philadelphia, PN: Westminster Press, 1970).

¹⁰⁴ Ivor J. Davidson, *The Birth of the Church: From Jesus to Constantine*, The Baker History of the Church, vol. 1, Tim Dowley, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 62.

Antioch, he sat willingly with the Gentiles in open table fellowship, only to pull away when certain Jews from the Jerusalem church arrived. Paul describes the men as both “men from James,” a reference to the Jerusalem church under James’ leadership, and “the circumcision party,” a reference to their agenda. This is an important point, and one that favors the view that these events preceded the Jerusalem council. For, although some have suggested that this was a rogue group insisting on Gentile adherence to the Torah without authority from Jerusalem, the description speaks otherwise. Paul’s descriptive phrase as “men from James” suggests they had been sent as emissaries by James “to urge the Jewish believers in Antioch to be more careful in their relations with Gentiles.”¹⁰⁵ This event would, at best, appear strange and, at worst, appear hypocritical, if it occurred after the Jerusalem council’s endorsement of open table fellowship. For Peter, it would also seem most likely that his visit to Antioch occurred after his vision and encounter with Cornelius. So why would he pull away when the men from Jerusalem arrived? A broader view of Peter would suggest that his actions were aimed at becoming “all things to all men” (1 Cor. 9:22) by accommodating to the members “whose consciences were scrupulous and unemancipated.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, perhaps it was that Peter was seeking peace, not division, in his attempt to appease the visiting Jews in order “to protect the integrity of the Judean mission.”¹⁰⁷ However, Paul did not see it that way, understanding that whatever benefits Peter’s actions provided the Jewish visitors paled in comparison to the detriments of Jewish-Gentile table fellowship in his treatment of the Gentiles. Although scholars debate the ultimate outcome of this conflict, the collective decision later reached at Jerusalem clearly went in favor of Paul’s view. It

¹⁰⁵ Leon Morris, *Galatians: Paul’s Charter of Christian Freedom*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 77.

¹⁰⁶ F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 177.

¹⁰⁷ Keener, *Galatians*, 164.

seems much more likely that Peter would have accepted Paul's rebuke, and the decision reached at Antioch was echoed at the Jerusalem Council shortly thereafter. It is also highly unlikely that Paul would have mentioned this incident if the confrontation had ended in failure.

Within the scope of table fellowship sat one of the most prolific ordinances of early Christian worship—the Eucharist. Sacred meals were an integrated part of Jewish culture, and it must have been difficult for Jewish Christians to approach the Eucharist with a different perspective. For example, the Jewish fellowship meals such as the Passover and *chaburah*, meals used to inaugurate the Sabbath and on occasions when friends gathered, would have likely been echoed in the Eucharist.¹⁰⁸ Thus, a restructuring of the prerequisites was needed, especially for Gentiles who needed to redefine their orientation from what they were doing to what Christians did. Paul addressed these issues in his own writings (1 Cor. 11:17-22, 33-34), ensuring that Gentiles understood the solemnity of this meal of thanksgiving. Of similar importance was determining who was eligible to participate in this memorial meal now that Torah observance had been set aside. Baptism now emerged as the new standard of participation in the Eucharist, where “the convert forsakes the Israel that had rejected the Messiah, to join the community that owned His sovereignty.”¹⁰⁹ It is also no coincidence that the *Didache* was written in Antioch as an instruction guide to Gentiles, which outlines the importance of the Eucharist and that only those baptized in the Lord could participate (*Did.* 9.5) Clearly baptism, as the qualification for participation, became “the standard view of the church.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Laurie Guy, *Introducing Early Christianity: A Topical Survey of Its Life, Beliefs and Practices*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 196.

¹⁰⁹ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 104.

¹¹⁰ Guy, 196.

IV.A. The *Birkat Ha-Minim* and its Effects upon the Early Church

Paul's mission to unite the Jews and Gentiles in a collective movement may have found an unexpected blessing when the Eighteen Benedictions and the *Birkat Ha-Minim* emerged in the Jewish synagogues during the early Christian movement. The Eighteen Benedictions is a central prayer that is recited three times a day by all observant Jews while standing and, within this prayer set, exists the twelfth benediction known as the *Birkat Ha-Minim*, which curses the *minim* (lit. "kinds"), as heretical sects separated from the righteous.¹¹¹ Although archaeological discoveries have unearthed several different versions of the Eighteen Benedictions, of particular interest is the Geniza fragment, the oldest Palestinian witness, which includes amongst the *minim* a reference to the *Nazarim*, a specific reference to Christians, known as the "sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).¹¹² Although some scholars argue that the date of the *Birkat Ha-Minim* should be ascribed to the Council of Yavneh (Jamnia) following the destruction of the temple in AD 70, the general consensus suggests that the Eighteen Benedictions originated from the Second Temple period and that the main development of the prayer was formed *prior to* AD 70.¹¹³ Thus, if the curse of the *minim* (heretics) was expanded to include the "Nazarenes" in Jerusalem, this would indicate that the prayer was reformed as a "response to Christianity...readily employed to reinforce behavior and the boundaries of the community."¹¹⁴ Within the Geniza fragment, the prayer directs a curse upon the *minim* and the *Nazarim*, declaring that they "instantly perish" (T-S K27.33b) and be "blotted from the book of the

¹¹¹ Joel Marcus, "Birkat Ha-Minim Revisited," *Journal of New Testament Studies*, 55, no. 4 (Oct, 2009): 523-551. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1017/S0028688509990063>.

¹¹² David Instone-Brewer, "The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim Before 70 CE," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 54, no. 1 (April, 2003): 25-44. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1093/jts/54.1.25>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat Haminim*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 39.

living.”¹¹⁵ Because the fragment suggests the temple is still standing, and the likely addition of the *Nazarim* points to a direct cursing of the Christians, a strong case can be made that a “corporate decision”¹¹⁶ was reached by synagogue leaders to remove the Jews who were confessing Jesus Christ as Messiah. This objective was of such priority in the synagogues that, although other errors in recitation could be overlooked, any errors uttered in the *Birkat Haminim* required repetition in order to ensure a Jew was not a heretic who was deliberately avoiding the utterance. The *Tanhuma Vayiqra*, a halakhic introduction cited in the Jerusalem Talmud, clarified that “if he errs in the *birkat haminim*, we make him repeat and recite it against his will...for if he has some aspect of *minut*, he will curse himself and the congregation will answer ‘amen.’”¹¹⁷

How could such a curse upon Christians be considered an unexpected blessing for the Gentile mission? A brief examination of the implications of the curse will reveal two major advantages. First, it is important to remember that Christianity began within the matrix of a Jewish environment, and was significantly influenced by Judaism both before and after AD 70.¹¹⁸ Prior to the *Birkat Ha-Minim*, the lines of identity were blurred for many Jewish Christians, who attempted to syncretize their newfound faith with their duty to the synagogue. As a result, it was common to see Jewish Christians continuing to fulfill their Sabbath requirements, including attendance in the synagogue. But now, the emergence of the *Birkat Ha-Minim* had marked a definitive line in the sand, forcing Jewish Christians to make a decision on where their loyalty now stood. In his analysis of this critical period, Wellhausen notes, “For to this period

¹¹⁵ David Instone-Brewer, “The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim Before 70 CE.”

¹¹⁶ Langer, 27.

¹¹⁷ Langer, 25.

¹¹⁸ Guy, 194.

also belongs the definitive separation between the synagogue and the church; henceforward Christianity could no longer figure as a Jewish sect.”¹¹⁹

An example of this very shift may be evident in Acts 18 where Paul goes to Corinth and begins to share the Gospel, attempting to persuade both Jews and Greeks (v. 4). After being rejected by the synagogue, Paul declares that he will not go to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46, 18:6), and moves next door to the home of the Gentile, Titius Justus, where he establishes the home church at Corinth. It would thus appear that the *Birkat Ha-Minim* would push Jewish Christians away from the synagogue and into closer fellowship with their Gentile brethren. If the benediction and curse were intended to “weld the whole of Judaism into a monolithic structure”¹²⁰ by removing Christians and/or any other threat to orthodoxy, then perhaps it also unwittingly forged Christianity into a more solid identity. Now, all doubt as to spiritual identity would be removed, as Jewish Christians, as well as Gentiles, would be united under the banner of Christ by faith. The second advantage would be found in that the curse acknowledged Christianity as a legitimate threat and primary target as the “*minim par excellence*” against the synagogue.¹²¹ This now meant that “the synagogue has begun to view the Christian movement as an essential and more or less clearly distinguishable rival.”¹²² No longer did the Christian movement need to be confined to the synagogue as the target of its Gospel. To the benefit of the Christian church, and especially the Gentiles, the new mission would now follow the edict of the Jerusalem council and begin to move beyond the Jewish synagogue.

¹¹⁹ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 574.

¹²⁰ J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 63.

¹²¹ Joel Marcus, “*Birkat Ha-Minim* Revisited.”

¹²² Martyn, 47.

J. Louis Martyn identified three Johannine passages he believed referred to the *Birkat Ha-Minim* and suggests that in each case a clear reference to the decision of the Jamnia Academy is evident. In John 9:22, John offers an “aside”¹²³ in his narrative on the blind man healed by Jesus, noting that the parents of the blind man were afraid to respond to the Pharisees, “for the Jews *had already agreed* that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.” Again, John shares how many of the Jewish leaders believed in Jesus but refused to confess because of their fear that they would be “put out of the synagogue” (12:42). In John 16:2, even Jesus warns His disciples, “They will put you out of the synagogues.” J. Louis Martyn believed that John made direct reference to the Benediction prayer that was apparently reformulated to include the *Nazarim* (Christians) amongst the *minim* (heretics) as a “means for detecting those Jews who want to hold a dual allegiance to Moses and to Jesus as Messiah...to separate such Jews from the synagogue.”¹²⁴ Although Martyn’s theory is plausible, the Benediction prayers seemed to be a common practice for all kinds of reasons.

In the later years following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, the Council at Jamnia (*bet-din*, lit. “house of judgment”), succeeded the former Sanhedrin at Jerusalem and became the “administrative seat of Jewish life.”¹²⁵ In many ways, the decree made at Jamnia to oust the Christians from the synagogue reflects an earlier tradition that may have emerged when Paul began to methodically preach Jesus as the Messiah within the synagogues. This may have unwittingly united Christian Jews and Gentiles in a stronger cause for Christ. Ferguson notes that

¹²³ Köstenberger notes the importance of John’s use of “asides” in order to clarify issues and/or provide information on certain aspects of his narrative. In this case, John may be using this aside in order to offer background information pertaining to the Council of Jamnia’s decision to oust Christians from the synagogue. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 231.

¹²⁴ Martyn, 66.

¹²⁵ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 400.

the “Jamnia period marks the beginning of the change from a temple-oriented Judaism comprising a variety of sects to a more united Judaism centered around the local synagogues.”¹²⁶ It may be that a similar unified front within Christianity may have resulted between Christian Jews and Gentiles identified by faith in Christ. If so, then it happened at the Jerusalem Council.

IV.B. The Jerusalem Council and Endorsement of the New Gentile Mission

In the events leading up to the Jerusalem Council, Luke seems intent on sketching Peter, not as a member of the “circumcision group,” but as holding “a mediating position in the confrontation which was gradually shaping up.”¹²⁷ Although Peter seems reluctant at first to accept God’s vision of open Gentile table fellowship (Acts 10:9-16), he openly submits to the Spirit’s instruction to witness to Cornelius (10:28-29) and interprets the glossolalia event as the newfound eligibility of Gentiles to be baptized free from the Torah (10:44-48). Luke then transitions to the first journey undertaken by Paul, Barnabas and Mark, seemingly highlighting two points: 1) John Mark’s departure, and 2) Paul’s new missionary agenda to the Gentiles. It is against this backdrop that Luke prepares the reader for the monumental meeting that will take place in Jerusalem.

The council meeting begins with a report given by Paul and Barnabas on their evangelism ministry to the Gentiles (15:4). Immediately, a select group of men representing the Pharisees respond by insisting on circumcision for the Gentiles in order “to keep the law of Moses” (15:5). Interestingly, after some debate, it is Peter, and not Paul, that first emerges as a champion for the Gentiles, arguing that they should not place the “yoke” of the law upon the Gentiles (15:10).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Hengel, 92.

Within his argument, it is the reception of the Holy Spirit and glossolalia he witnessed, most likely in his preaching to Cornelius' household, that convinces Peter that the distinctive lines between Jews and Gentiles have now been removed (15:9). For Peter and the majority of those present at the council, it was the possession of the Holy Spirit and the resulting glossolalia that served as "the infallible witness to salvation."¹²⁸ After another report by Paul and Barnabas on the "signs and wonders" that God had done in their mission to the Gentiles (15:12), this time it is James, the half-brother of Jesus and most prominent leader of the Jerusalem Church that renders the final judgment. Quoting from Amos 9:11-12, James argues that Amos' prophecy to rebuild David's "booth" is here initiated by God's promised blessing of the Gentiles, and that day has now arrived.¹²⁹

Although some have argued that the issue at Jerusalem concerned "the circumcision of Gentile converts, not the problem of dietary laws,"¹³⁰ such a demarcation is not so simple. The debate was not merely theological, but in the real and practical way that Jews should associate with Gentile converts. Even James' instructions that the Gentiles continue to abstain from idols, sexual immorality, and foods that have been strangled or contain blood appear more closely aligned to the Noachic law than the Mosaic law (15:20), and distinctly aimed at the regulations for table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. Thus, James' decree settles two primary questions raised at the Jerusalem Council. First was the issue of circumcision as a necessity for Gentile salvation, and that was rejected, while the second dealt with the more practical issue of

¹²⁸ Stein, 469.

¹²⁹ J. Paul Tanner, "James' Quotation of Amos 9 to Settle the Jerusalem Council Debate in Acts 15." *Journal of Evangelical Theological Studies* 55, no. 1 (2012): 65-85. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1018148642?accountid=12085>.

¹³⁰ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 132.

Gentiles following minimal dietary restrictions for the sake of Jewish purity laws, and that was approved.¹³¹ James' ruling is accepted by those present and the new Gentile mission is endorsed.

It must be noted that the traditional method to settle disputes within the rabbinic academies was that “the majority view always prevailed,”¹³² and here a compromise was made which clearly favored the church at Antioch. James Dunn appropriately notes that the actions of James and Peter “should be included in the Gentile Christian applause.”¹³³ Most certainly, if not for the leadership and grace extended to the Gentiles at the hands of these two pillar of the Jerusalem church, the Gentile mission would have been crippled. For the Gentiles, the decision of the Council was welcome news, since circumcision was viewed as an “abhorrent mutilation of the body”¹³⁴ amongst the Gentiles, and a definitive barrier to conversion. Amongst those present at the Jerusalem council, Mark would have most likely have been present, although neither Luke nor Paul mention him. Mark had returned directly to Jerusalem after leaving Paul and Barnabas at Perga, and the events of the council would have certainly have been of the highest importance to him. One can imagine what impact the words of Peter, his mentor, and James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, would have had upon his theology. John Mark would have viewed Peter and James as symbols of orthodox Judaism, and their leadership at the council would have likely convicted him to acknowledge his mistake in abandoning Paul and Barnabas at Perga and determine to rejoin his former team when they prepared for their second mission (15:37).

¹³¹ Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 448.

¹³² Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 365.

¹³³ James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, Christianity in the Making, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 457.

¹³⁴ Gary M. Burge, Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament Within its Cultural Contexts*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 238.

IV.C. John Mark: Symbol of Jewish and Gentile Reconciliation?

In many ways, the life and ministry of John Mark, both prior to and following the events described in Acts 13:13, has been largely ignored. There is much to derive from Luke's description of the events surrounding his life, and most especially in its meaning for the new Gentile mission that emerged. In many ways, his life stands as an example of both the division and the reconciliation that occurred within the Gentile controversy. At first, John Mark appears to initiate division and controversy through his actions. His departure at Perga initiates a tension between himself and Paul that appears to symbolize the initial Jewish rejection of the new Gentile mission, and his desire to resume the missionary work with them results in the split between Peter and Barnabas (Acts 15:39). However, his post-Jerusalem council ministry leads him to reconcile with Paul (Col. 4:10; Phlm. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11) and become a treasured token to Peter, who would regard Mark as "my son" (1 Peter 5:13) and even grant him the honorary title of "co-worker."¹³⁵ As mentioned earlier, Luke would also appear to sketch Mark as a transformative symbol by the manner in which he addressed his name. At first, Luke would intentionally refer to him by his Hebrew identity, either as "John whose other name was Mark" (Acts 12:12, 25), or simply as "John" (13:5, 13). Only after the Jerusalem Council did Luke address him by either both names, "John Mark" (15:37), or even his primary Greek name of "Mark" (15:39).

John Mark stands as a symbol of the transformative power of the Gospel and the eventual bridge that was formed between Jews and Gentiles, for although Luke clearly described his abandonment of the first mission in a negative fashion, "this need not mean that he would assume that Mark could change...and probably shared the widespread view that character could

¹³⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *Neither Jew Nor Greek: A Contested Identity*, Christianity in the Making, vol. 3. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 50.

change over time.”¹³⁶ Although no indication is made that Paul and Barnabas ever worked together again, we know that Mark initially resumed his missionary work with Barnabas and eventually regained Paul’s trust in ministry. In his letter to the Colossians, we find Mark ministering to Paul while under arrest (4:3).¹³⁷ So also in his letter to Philemon, where he regards Mark as a “fellow worker” (v. 24). In what many believe to be his final letter before his martyrdom, Paul specifically requests that Timothy send him Mark because he was “very useful” to his ministry (2 Tim. 4:11). Such a request speaks volumes of Paul’s newfound faith in Mark. As mentioned earlier, Mark would remain close to his mentor, Peter, who would regard him as a “son” and “co-worker” (1 Peter 5:13). Eusebius tells of the story behind the writing of Mark’s Gospel. As Mark ministered alongside Peter in Rome, the people so desperately desired to preserve the words spoken by Peter that they began, “to solicit Mark as the companion of Peter, and whose Gospel we have...until they prevailed with the man and thus became the means of that history which is called the Gospel according to Mark.”¹³⁸

John Mark stands a symbol of Jewish-Gentile reconciliation, remaining faithful to the work and ministry of both Jewish and Gentile groups by his close association to the two primary representatives of each group—Peter and Paul. This would seem to be Luke’s intention, to demonstrate Mark’s life as a symbol of improved relations between Jews and Gentiles. Throughout his narrative Mark appears morphed from a reluctant Jew to eventually becoming the writer of the Gospel that bears his name which was written for primarily Gentile

¹³⁶ Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 2031.

¹³⁷ Although determining the occasion for Colossians remains unsettled, Mark’s apparent freedom to visit the church at Colosse (4:10), suggests that he was either working directly with Paul during this phase of his ministry, or working with Peter in Rome and readily available while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. So also the Letter of Philemon, which was likely written under the same circumstances. See Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary, vol. 32 (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1991).

¹³⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History*, translated by C. F. Cruse, 2.15, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 50.

nonbelievers.¹³⁹ A later tradition has Mark traveling to Egypt, after the deaths of Peter and Paul, where he served as pastor of the church at Alexandria until his martyrdom in approximately AD 68.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the complete biblical evidence reveals John Mark as much more than just a minor character who abandoned the mission at Perga at Pamphylia. Rather, his complete life testimony stands as a symbol of the transformative power of Jesus Christ.

V. Conclusion

Some scholars have suggested that “Mark was not a prominent person in the primitive church [who] had tarnished his reputation by leaving Paul and Barnabas in the middle of a missionary campaign.”¹⁴¹ But is this analysis completely correct? There were most certainly implications of leadership, and the issue of resolve to do what is right regardless of the cost. Within these parameters, John Mark had clearly fallen short during his first missionary journey, but reconsideration must be made on whether or not Mark truly understood what was right at that moment. If his rift with Paul was based on, as this thesis has argued, serious theological issues concerning Gentile adherence to the Torah and Jewish laws concerning table fellowship with Gentiles, then it is entirely probable that Mark felt conviction that he should not compromise his faith for Paul’s new Gentile agenda. Longenecker makes a striking observation, “Mark may have been concerned about the effect news of a direct Christian mission to Gentiles would have in Jerusalem and on the church there and may have wanted to have no part in it.”¹⁴² As such,

¹³⁹ Mark Dunn, “Mark: The Man and His Gospel,” *Biblical Illustrator*, vol. 45, no. 3 (Spring, 2019): 71-74.

¹⁴⁰ William S. McBirnie, *The Search for the Twelve Apostles*, rev. ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 195.

¹⁴¹ James A. Brooks, *Mark*, The New American Commentary, vol. 23, David S. Dockery, ed. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1991), 26.

¹⁴² Longenecker, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 421.

Mark's actions, as flawed as they were, indicated conviction to a worldview that many, if not most, traditional Aramaic-speaking Jews held at that time.

In his analysis of Paul's conversion, Ernst Käsemann observed, "It is man's secret nobility to have to reflect about himself in this way, to be compelled to criticize himself, to be forced to confront himself with the question of the right and the true."¹⁴³ Indeed. Paul faced this challenge on the way to Damascus. Peter encountered such self-reflection at Joppa, and Mark would have to confront himself at the Jerusalem council. John Mark is not an anomaly. He is a symbol of what the Gospel was intended to accomplish. Thus, within the scope of this analysis, one finds in John Mark the hopeful bridge between Jews and Gentiles made possible, not by the Mosaic covenant, but by the new covenant now established through faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, in the final analysis, the answer to the question of what motivated John Mark to abandon the first missionary journey and its implications for the early church appears rooted in his initial theological rift based on his narrow vision of God's grace. However, in the end it would seem that John Mark was willing to criticize and confront himself with the question of what is right and true and come to perceive that God had indeed made something new (Isa. 43:19) in order to accomplish the redemptive promise of old (Gen. 12:3).

¹⁴³ Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, translated by Margaret Kohl, (Philadelphia, PN: Fortress Press, 1971), 17.

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